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IWU to Celebrate African American History Month

January 28, 2010

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, Student Senate and the Black Student Union have planned events for the month of February in honor of African American History Month.

African American History Month, which was extended to the entire month of February in 1976, was first celebrated through a weeklong celebration in 1926. According to The Library of Congress, the month is an opportunity to pay “tribute to the generations of African Americans who struggled with adversity to achieve full citizenship in American society.”

Illinois Wesleyan African American History Month events will include:

From the Ashes of Tragedy: The Birth of the NAACP

This event is a lecture featuring guest speaker Chief Ronald Swan of the Illinois State University Police Department. The lecture will take place on Thursday, Feb. 11 at 7 p.m. in the Hansen Student Center (300 Beecher St., Bloomington). Guests will have the opportunity to join and receive information about the local branch of the NAACP. Swan, who is an active member of the Bloomington/Normal branch, was awarded the Roy Wilkins Award, the highest honor of the NAACP, in 2009.

Blue Moon Coffeehouse

Musician Vance Gilbert will perform on Feb. 13.

Soul Food Dinner

The annual [Soul Food Dinner](#) hosted by Student Senate will be held on Feb. 21 in the Hansen Student Center (300 Beecher St., Bloomington). The dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. and a speech by Jeff Johnson will begin at 6:30 p.m. The speech is free and open to the public. The dinner will cost \$10 for faculty, staff, students, and community members wishing to attend. Students also have the option of exchanging their Sunday brunch in order to attend the dinner for free. The keynote speaker for the Soul Food Dinner, Johnson, is an award-winning journalist, social activist and political commentator, known for his commitment to influencing positive social change. For additional information concerning the Soul Food Dinner, contact Brittany Powell at bpowell@iwu.edu.

We Wear the Mask

“We Wear the Mask” will be a black poetry night held at 7 p.m. on Feb. 25 in the Davidson Room of the Memorial Center (104 University St., Bloomington). The event will have a coffeehouse atmosphere featuring readings of poems from the Harlem Renaissance and of

modern poetry. In addition, IWU student Kamaya Thompson, a sophomore theatre arts major from Chicago, Ill., will read some of her work.

Black Student Union Banquet

The Black Student Union (BSU) will host its annual banquet on Feb. 28 from 6-8 p.m. in the Hansen Student Center (300 Beecher St., Bloomington). The banquet will celebrate “42 years of BSU excellence in turning our dreams into actions of leadership,” said Darren Muhammad, president of BSU. The banquet is free and open to the public, but those wishing to attend should please reply to bsu.iwu@gmail.com.

In addition to these events, the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs will take interested IWU students to Illinois State University on Feb. 23 for a performance titled “NWC – The Race Show.” For additional information about this show, contact the acting director of multicultural affairs, Roshaunda Ross, at rross1@iwu.edu.

For more information about African American Heritage Month or the events listed, contact the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs at (309) 556-3662.

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